



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | FEBRUARY-MARCH 2022

“Educating today’s students for tomorrow’s challenges”



Students thriving in High Ability Program

Highland’s High Ability Program, updated in September to better meet the needs of students, is providing academic enrichment to more than 100 students.

Specialized tests that identify high ability students in Grades 1-12 are followed by academic opportunities that foster learning.

Warren Elementary School Principal Christina Davis, who serves as coordinator for Warren, Southridge, Johnston and Merkle schools, said what used to be known as the Gifted and Talented program at Southridge Elementary has evolved.

“We used to believe high-ability students learned better when taught as a group in a single location,” Davis said. “Today’s high-ability elementary students are taught in their neighborhood

classrooms with their peers. Instruction is augmented by small group lessons throughout the day.”

Academic plans follow students. Middle School Assistant Principal Scheryl Corman said honors classes provide the more in-depth learning high ability students crave.

Highland High School Assistant Principal Anthony Belli said in grades 9-12, students have the option of taking any one of 30 Honors, Advanced Placement, Pre-AP and Dual Credit courses that fall into nine subject areas — art, music, science, math, engineering, social studies, language arts, business, and world languages.

The next goal is to work with teachers to develop differentiated activities that meet the needs of high ability students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Learn more about Highland’s High Ability Program and procedures used to identify students at highland.k12.in.us.



Highland senior lands full ride to Ivy League school

Come August, Senior Michael Burns will be heading east on a full-ride scholarship to the Ivy League’s own Dartmouth College.

If not for a father who recognized the potential in his high-ability son, Burns said he would not be in the enviable position of attending one of the country’s top colleges.

“My father always pushed me to do my best,” Burns said. “I entered the Questbridge program — which matches low income and high ability students with a university that meets their goals. That set me up for the scholarship.”

The senior will be leaving an indelible mark at Highland as a founding member of the Sustainability Club and founder of Diversity University, a club new to Highland with a mission to make the community more loving toward one another.

His goal at Dartmouth: experience all he can while pursuing a degree in pre-med. “My father died of a heart problem in 2020,” he said. “I want my education to help find answers that will save others.”

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SCHOOL BOARD

Robert Kuva, President
Victor A. Garcia, Vice President
Patrick Krull, Secretary
Luanne Jurczak, member
Allencia Ballard, member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

INFO: Visit highland.k12.in.us for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.



Senior Chloe Churilla – girls basketball’s eighth highest scorer in the region – hit that magic milestone of 1,000 high school basketball points at her last regular season game. Churilla, a gifted player, has had a spot on the varsity team since she began studies at HHS as a freshman. [R.H. Walker Photography]

	Games Played	Points	Rebounds	Free Throws	3 pointers
Freshman Year	22	102	93	34/59	0
Sophomore Year	20	207	105	43/94	2
Junior Year	22	347	164	97/178	6
Senior Year	22 so far	352	186	77/128	9

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

*Our students give us so many reasons to celebrate!
Here’s a special shout out to two you should know!*

It’s time to celebrate! Achievements, academics and accolades: Take your pick.

Senior Chloe Churilla (pictured above) – girls basketball’s eighth highest scorer in the region – hit that magic milestone of 1,000 high school basketball points at her last regular season game. Those who follow girls basketball in Highland had been hoping Chloe would reach the mark before sectionals so we could celebrate on her home court – and we did.

Cheers were deafening. The game was stopped to honor this incredible achievement. It was Chloe Churilla Night in the fieldhouse.

Senior Michael Burns found out just before Christmas that he will be heading to Dartmouth College in New Hampshire next year on a full academic scholarship.

These are just a few stories from the class of 2022. There are so many more.

Chloe and Michael are superstars by any measure. They are also an incredibly great group of kids that work together to make

things better – here and in our community.

Michael Burns didn’t just get great grades: He has worked to help the environment and diversity – first as a founder of the Sustainability Club and one of the first student members of the Highland Tree Board. This school year, he founded Diversity University, a high school club that addresses ways we can all be kinder to each other.

Chloe, who sits with Michael on Student Council, is more than an outstanding basketball player. She is a dual-sport athlete, who is serving out her term as a student member of the Highland Education Foundation.

These are incredibly nice kids who are already making the world better because they are in it. They are two of our very own, I think you should know.



Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland



English Language Learners

Parents get first look at program that helps students who come from non-English speaking homes break down language barriers

Julie Larson's passion for teaching a specialized curriculum known as English Language Learners began when she was student teaching at Highland High.

Jane Sprenne found her niche teaching elementary ELL students following an extended trip to Peru.

Today, Larson, Sprenne and Middle School ELL teacher Zachary Davis assist more than 100 students, who arrive in Highland fluent in languages as varied as Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, and Punjabi.

Their goal: help students with limited proficiency in English break down language barriers that impede successful learning. Sprenne said teachers administer language assessments to determine how well the students are learning.

From elementary to high school

UPCOMING PARENTS NIGHT

Highland's ELL instructors will host the First Annual English Language Learners Parents Night to help build community and promote literacy from **5-6 p.m. March 16 at Highland Middle School**. ELL teachers and aides will give a short presentation about the program and available resources, as well as host a meet-and-greet with refreshments and a free book to take home and read with their child.

students, Larson said the program is making a difference.

"We have students preparing to attend a university. Others are learning skills that will help them enter the work force," she said. "Our ELL students never cease to amaze me with their brilliance, humor, and acceptance of others. I enjoy teaching this group of students and advocating on their behalf."



DID YOU KNOW?

The number of ELL students is growing rapidly in the United States. Today, nearly 10 percent of pre-K-2 students are ELL students. **It is estimated that by 2025, 25 percent of students could be ELL students.** And just like native English-speaking students, not all ELL students are alike.



Time to register Highland children for kindergarten

Highland public elementary schools will hold kindergarten registration for the upcoming year in two phases:

- **PHASE 1:** Visit highland.k12.in.us starting 8 a.m. Feb. 28 to sign up.
- **PHASE 2:** Parents are urged to bring their children and the items listed below to the school that serves their immediate district. All registrations will be held from 2:30 to 6 p.m. on the dates below:

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

Johnston Elementary School
8220 Fifth St. • (219) 923-2428

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Merkley Elementary School
9340 Fifth St. • (219) 922-5640

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

Southridge Elementary School
9221 Johnston St. • (219) 922-5650

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

Warren Elementary School
2901 100th St. • (219) 922-5660

AGE REQUIREMENT

Students must be 5 years of age on or before Aug. 1, 2022.

ITEMS FOR REGISTRATION:

1. **Five proofs of residency**
Two of the following:
NIPSCO, water, phone, cable (utility bills/deposit receipts)
Two of the following: Driver's license/state ID showing current address, vehicle registration, recent paycheck/unemployment check receipt.
One of the following: Lease and rent receipt, mortgage and homeowners insurance documents, notarized letter with three proofs of residency from the homeowner (parent/guardian must provide ID listed above)
2. **Proof of custody**, if applicable
3. **Birth certificate**
4. **Social security number**
5. **Current immunization records** (name and phone number of pediatrician)

HIGHLAND THEATRE COMPANY
AND HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENT ...

LION KING JUNIOR

ONE
NIGHT
ONLY!

High School juniors Madison Karulski and Wilfred Akanbi play Sarabi and Mufasa, respectively.



7 PM | FRIDAY | MARCH 4

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS RETURN TO THE STAGE

More than 60 students and two months of rehearsals will culminate in a first-of-its-kind performance combining the talents of Highland middle and high school students.

Theatre Director Matt Domasica called the experiment an unqualified success.

“We weren’t sure how this cross-pollination between grade levels would work,” he said. “As we navigate each rehearsal, we are seeing a transformation. Our high schoolers have assumed the role of mentors, getting our younger performers comfortable

on the big stage. At the same time, the younger students bring an enthusiasm and energy to every practice that is infectious.”

Lion King Junior is 70 high-energy minutes that feature the songs and characters the world has come to love.

“We were lucky enough to get costume pieces and masks thanks to the theatre director at St. Thomas More School in Munster, who had created them for their Lion King Junior production,” Domasica said. “We hope to see a great turnout.”

HighlandTheatreCompany.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TICKETS

TRIVIA NIGHT

Join the Highland Education Foundation for a night of trivia, drinks, silent auction, raffles – and fun for a great cause!

WHEN: February 26 - Doors and bar open at 6 p.m. Trivia starts at 7 p.m.

WHERE: Lincoln Center Banquet Hall

TICKETS: \$240 for a table of eight.

INFO: For more information or to RSVP, email hefdnevents@gmail.com.



MATTRESS SALE

Feeling like the Princess – or the Pea? It may be time for a new mattress. The choir, band, orchestra and theater students are hosting a mattress sale to raise funds for the fine arts department.

The fund-raiser offers everything a mattress store has to offer except the high prices. Not only can you save up to 50 percent off retail prices, but roughly \$100 to \$150 goes to the school for every mattress sold.

Mattresses – available in all sizes – include major brands like Beautyrest and Therapedic. Layaway, delivery and credit are also available.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 12

WHERE: Highland High School

INFO: Text STO to 219-280-2233 for Facebook link #beds4highland.

ENGRAVED BRICKS

The athletic booster club is offering all seniors an engraved 4” x8” brick at a low price of \$40. Bricks will be placed in front of the school near the flag poles in our Legacy Garden.

DEADLINE: February 28

QUESTIONS? Please email sstele@highland.k12.in.us.